



*This bulletin, produced by TASB Leadership Team Services, examines research and shares philosophies to inform and promote exceptional governance within school boards across Texas.*

## Focus, Alignment, and Monitoring

*by Phil Gore, PhD, Division Director of Leadership Team Services*

With all the things calling for our attention as trustees of Texas public schools, it can be difficult to maintain focus on our bottom line—student performance. However, **eXceptional Governance (XG)** demands a relentless focus on improving student learning. This requires serious intentionality and radical commitment to our purpose.

When boards focus on improving student learning, they ensure the district vision and goals align with the superintendent's performance goals, district and campus improvement plans, and student learning goals in the classroom. Intentional governance with focus and alignment of efforts requires a monitoring plan.

You may have heard, "What gets measured gets done," or "What gets measured improves." Pearson's Law states: "That which is measured improves; that which is measured and reported improves exponentially."

We know that students are more than a test score. Students, like the

rest of us, have good days and bad days. That's one reason why multiple measures over time are important when assessing student learning. These measurements should be reported to the board throughout the year and promote a culture of engagement and continuous improvement.

Just as the dials and gauges on a car's dashboard indicate the car's performance on a road trip, we need student district performance dashboards that represent progress and needs, and also provide early warning indicators. A board focused on improving student learning ensures their district has multiple measures of student performance on their dashboard—keeping the district on track and moving in the right direction.

In order to provide oversight regarding student academic achievement and strategic leadership for maximizing student performance, boards need to focus on improving their performance. Exceptional boards set goals for improving their perfor-

mance and model the type of continuous improvement they want to see throughout the system.

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—Pearson's Law

Board goals are not district goals. They are not superintendent goals. They are goals for how the board is going to improve its work. Whatever you call them, the board needs a clear and focused strategy for improvement. That begins with self-assessment, and then it continues with an actionable plan to focus the board's work on improving student performance.

TASB's **XG** Project encourages improved student performance in Texas. For more information and resources about what boards can do to provide governance and oversight that maximizes student learning, visit [xg.tasb.org](http://xg.tasb.org).